WUSC EUMC

2022 - 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Cover: Members of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for our DREEM initiative in Kenya come together for a workshop in Kenya. The YAC provides valuable guidance to the DREEM project and ensures that activities are designed and delivered to meet the needs of refugees and displaced young people. © WUSC

A community member shares their perspective on initiatives that seek to address gender-based barriers to employment for women and increase women's economic empowerment at an International Women's Day celebration organized alongside the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, in Balqa, Jordan. © WUSC

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

There has been an exciting evolution within our programming portfolio this past year. Some key projects have recently come to—or are soon nearing—an end, while many new projects are quickly ramping up.

These changes, along with the rapidly evolving contexts in which we operate, has stimulated deep reflection and learning across the organization. Our team has emerged from these conversations with a strengthened commitment to understanding and changing the systems that continue to constrain or enable young people's ability to thrive. This commitment stems from the impact we are witnessing across our programs as we shift towards a more systems view of the greatest challenges and opportunities that affect the lives of young people.

I hope you will enjoy reading more about the results we have achieved with our network of partners throughout this year's report.

We have also emerged from these conversations with an evolved understanding of our work in education. We have increasingly been hearing the question, "Education for what?" as young people around the world reflect on the relevance of the education that they receive, particularly in contexts affected by conflict, crises, and displacement. As a result, our new programming is increasing the connections between education, economic opportunities, and empowerment. In some instances, this looks like strengthening alternative education and atypical pathways to economic opportunities, including entrepreneurship and self-employment. In others, it looks like increasing our focus on the potential of education to advance gender equality and foster young girls' voice, choice, and agency. And we have deepened our engagement with employers to facilitate improved workplaces for young people as they transition out of education.

We have greatly appreciated the important, reflective conversations that have been taking place within our organization and with our partners during this past year. The deep commitment to learning and continuous improvement that runs throughout this organization is its lifeblood, connecting thousands of people across oceans, generations, and diverse cultural experiences by the belief that a better world is possible.

Thank you for joining us in this vision.

Chris Eaton
Executive Director

Chris Whitaker
Chair, Board of Directors

In Vietnam, international volunteers from our Volunteer Cooperation Program work closely with our partners at the Hoa Sua School of Tourism and Economics, which offers free skills training to disadvantaged youth and helps them secure jobs in fields such as the culinary arts. © Frederic Seguin

Our vision is a better world for all young people. It is a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world in which all young people, especially women and refugees, are empowered to secure a good quality of life for themselves, their families, and their communities.

We believe supporting young people to access inclusive, high-quality, relevant, and rewarding education and economic opportunities is the best way to create a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world.

Yet too many young people around the world are not reaching their full potential. There are not enough opportunities accessible to youth to develop their knowledge and skills; they face significant barriers to entering the workforce and improving their livelihoods; and they are left out of important conversations that affect their lives.

The vast majority of young people live in regions that continue to be disproportionately affected by global challenges, including economic insecurity, political uprisings, conflict, and climate change, where they are exposed to further exclusion, inequality, and vulnerability because of their age.

STATE OF THE WORLD'S YOUTH

244 million
children and youth aged 3 to 17 are out of school
(UNESCO, 2023)

Nearly 1 in 4
young people aged 15 to 24 are not in any form of employment, education, or training
(ILO, 2022)

+ 1.9 million
children were born into refugee status over the past five years
(UNHCR, 2023)

25%
of partnered women aged 15 to 49 are unable to make decisions about their own health care
(UNFPA, 2023)

Youth are a big part of our who, why, and how. Their energy and optimism keep us eager for change and driven to find new solutions.

We apply systems thinking to better understand the most urgent needs and most promising levers of change to challenge the status quo and support lasting improvements to education and economic opportunities for young people.

Improving existing opportunities depends on the contributions of many individuals and organizations whose actions directly and indirectly intersect with education systems and economic sectors around the world. Through our programming, we aim to support those actors to drive innovation and improve performance so that all young people have the resources to achieve their aspirations and create their own futures.

We support our partners by:

- providing technical assistance to individuals and organizations whose actions directly and indirectly affect the education and economic opportunities available to young people.
- convening people, mobilizing knowledge, and engaging in policy discussions to adapt and scale what works for improved education and economic opportunities.
- engaging people on beliefs, norms, and behaviours that prevent young people from accessing education and economic opportunities and realizing their full potential.

For young women and young refugees in particular, we also work with partners in adjacent sectors that directly impact access to education and economic opportunities, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights and complementary pathways to refugee resettlement.

We believe young people's ideas, ideals, innovations, and power can change the world.

Across our programming, we seek to nurture environments that enable young people to exercise their agency and leadership for a better world.

OUR PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES

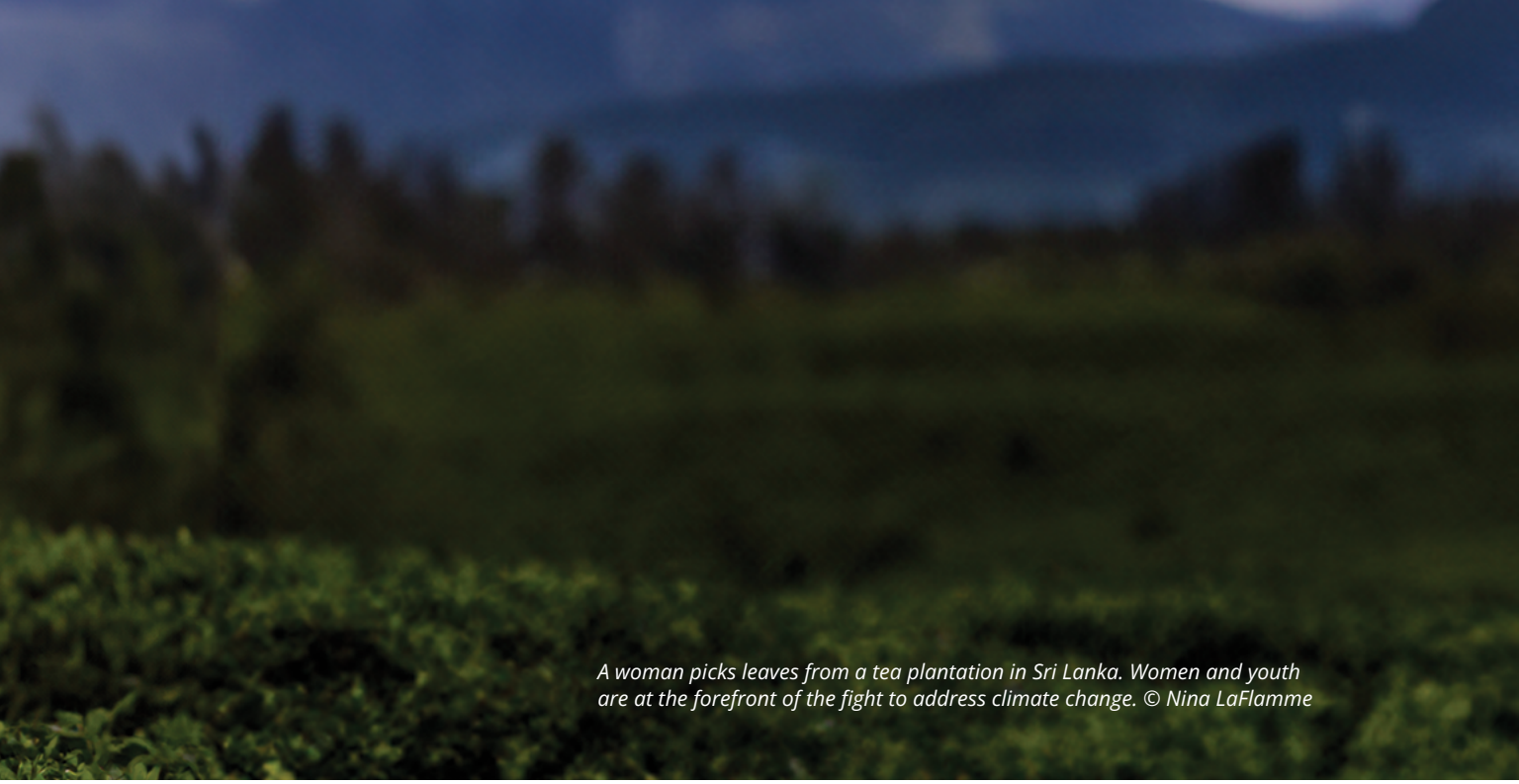
Contextual Relevance:
We adapt interventions to local realities and ongoing changes to deliver the most relevant, effective, and timely solutions to overcome the root causes of poverty.

Inclusivity:
We take an intersectional approach to enable broader inclusion through our programs and better ensure no one is left behind.

Sustainability:
We design and implement our initiatives so that their benefits have a long-lasting impact and can be carried forward by local actors.

Scale:
We influence change at a scale that is commensurate with the scale of the challenges youth face.

Quality:
We strive for quality in all that we do by grounding our work in evidence and learning to make the greatest possible contribution toward a better world for youth.



A woman picks leaves from a tea plantation in Sri Lanka. Women and youth are at the forefront of the fight to address climate change. © Nina LaFlamme

Our work contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, an internationally recognized agenda to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

As a trusted partner of Global Affairs Canada, WUSC also delivers results in key action areas of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy.

In partnership with Canada

In addition to our internal standards, WUSC's work is guided by several national and international standards that support organizational excellence.

- As members of Cooperation Canada, Canada's independent national voice for international cooperation, we are signatories to its Code of Ethics and its core principles of organizational transparency, accountability and integrity. WUSC is also a signatory to their Anti-Racism Framework for Canada's International Cooperation Sector.
- WUSC is a signatory to the Global Standard for Volunteering which ensures organizations that work through and with volunteers are both impactful and responsible. These standards are the result of global, multi-stakeholder consultation processes led by Forum, a global network of organizations involved in international volunteering.

REFLECTING ON OUR GLOBAL PROGRAMS IN 2023/2024

Our teams continue to show great creativity and resiliency in facilitating positive change for youth amidst ever-evolving challenges.

In education, major disruptions have worsened the learning crisis that predated the pandemic. Many proposed solutions often put additional demands on already overburdened teachers to respond.

Meanwhile, economic recovery post-COVID is ongoing and uneven between and within countries. Rising inflation and the cost of living, especially increased food prices, have seriously affected people's financial stability.

This is all in the context of a growing climate crisis, which has become increasingly apparent to all with increasing disasters. such as storms and drought, likely induced by or exacerbated by climate change. Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by these ongoing crises, with many indicators of gender equality showing backward progress since the onset of the pandemic.

And all of this is against the backdrop of conflict and social disruption which is driving the largest levels of population displacement and forced migration ever recorded.

These global shifts continue to drive our work and our ambitions. They remind us of the constant need for adaptation to ensure we continue to be aligned with and respond effectively to the greatest needs, while harnessing emerging and promising opportunities.

Here are some of the more significant adaptations we have made this past year as a global team:

We are **strengthening our focus on the foundations of learning** in the primary and secondary schools that we support, including literacy, numeracy, and social skills, in response to global learning losses. We are also increasing our efforts toward holistic support for students and teachers, including mental health support.

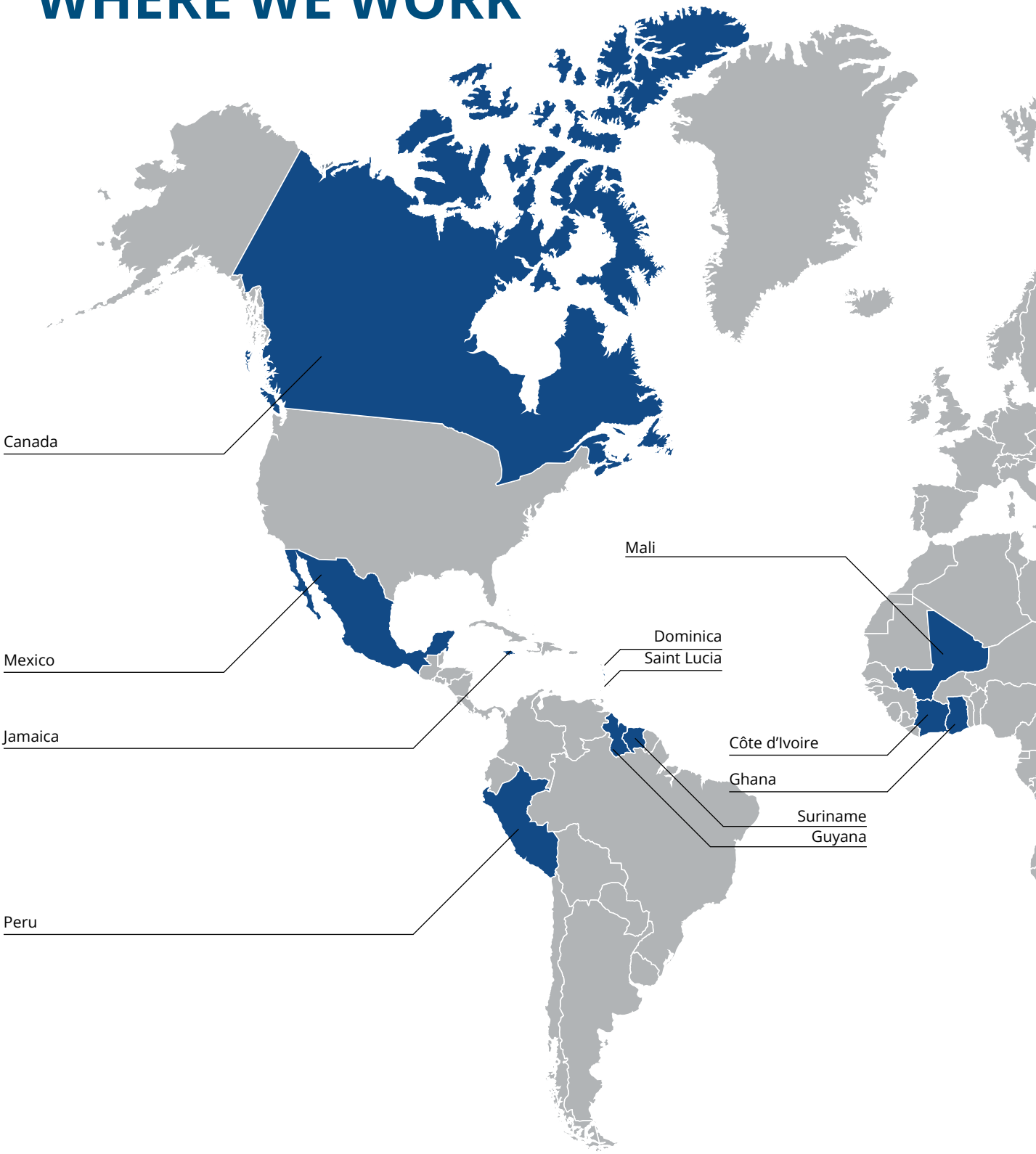
We are **deepening our engagement with employers, and their linkages to training institutions**, to support recent graduates in their transition from training to employment. This is particularly true in the digital and care economies, where our partners have found promising results. And we are working to help close the gap between policy and practice when it comes to worker's rights, especially for women and refugees.

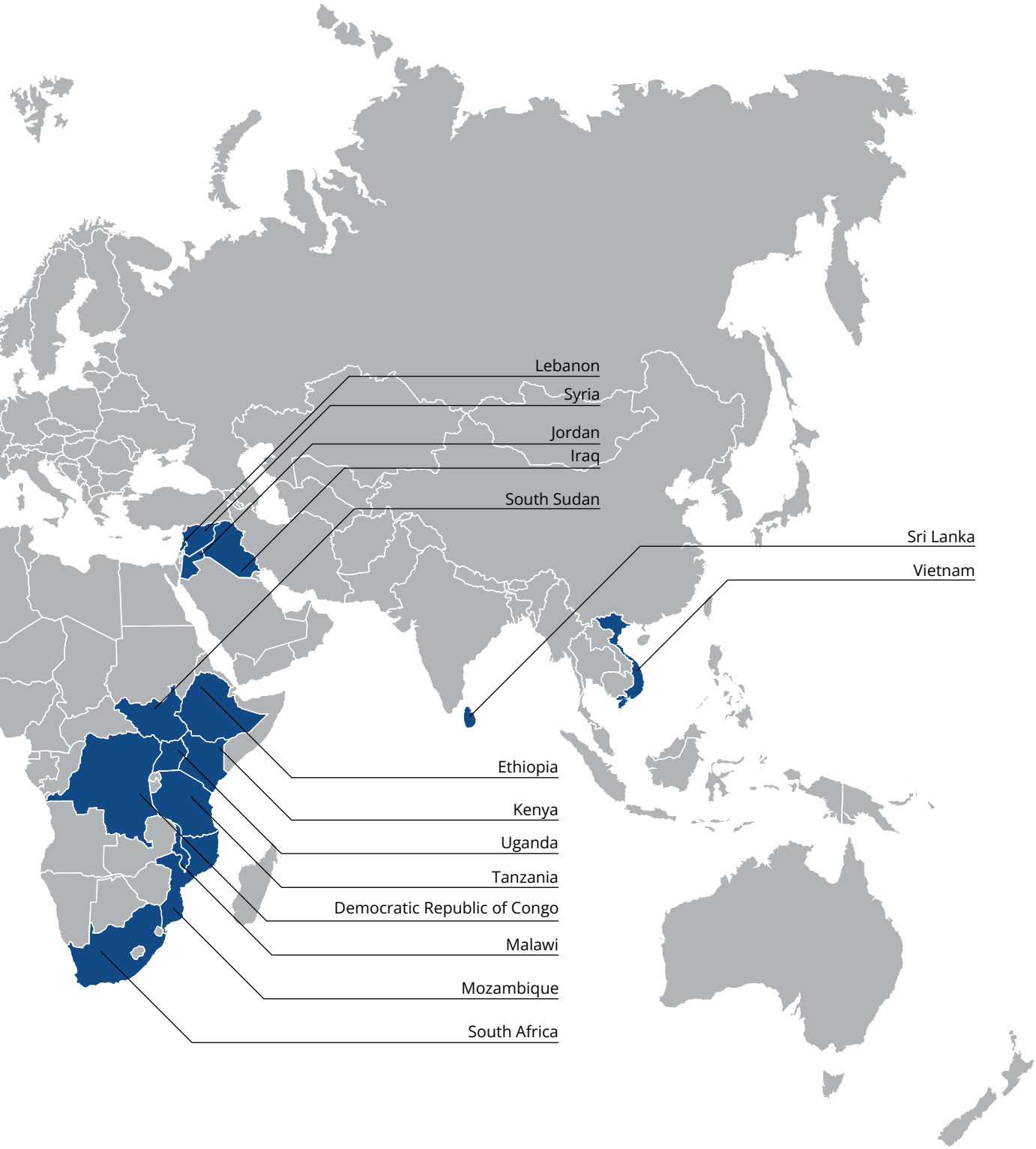
We are **giving greater attention to the important role of engaging with social norms**, particularly for greater gender equality and social inclusion, through the development of a new internal guidance note that unites our vision and approach. We are also testing new ways to deepen the engagement of men and boys in addressing gender barriers to education and economic opportunities.

We **continue to support Canada's leadership on complementary pathways to resettlement for refugees**. Last year, we were re-elected as Chair of the Task Force on Education Pathways. Through this and other opportunities, we are expanding our assistance to countries seeking to create and expand complementary pathways to resettlement for refugees, including the new Welcome Corps on Campus initiative in the US. We are also continuing to mobilize greater support for refugee-driven solutions toward sustainable changes in policy and practice. And we are continuing to apply a displacement lens to all of our initiatives, to increase our support to refugees across our programming. In addition to the 170+ refugees resettled to Canada last year through WUSC, we also provided direct support to 12,500+ refugees to access quality education and economic opportunities around the world.

Despite the changing contexts, one thing that has been abundantly clear this past year is that the work of our partners remains critical to creating a better world in which everyone is able to attain a good quality of life for themselves, their families, and their communities. We remain committed to this goal and to our ongoing learning and reflection to ensure our programs and our partners deliver the greatest impact possible for young people.

WHERE WE WORK




Lebanon
Syria
Jordan
Iraq
South Sudan
Sri Lanka
Vietnam
Ethiopia
Kenya
Uganda
Tanzania
Democratic Republic of Congo
Malawi
Mozambique
South Africa

With our partners, we reach a network of over

300,000

individuals who share in our commitment to improved education and economic opportunities for young people around the world.

Our partners are at the heart of the change process.

We work with a diverse range of actors to create sustainable and far-reaching impact for youth

Local Civil Society Organizations

WUSC collaboratively works with local civil society partners in all of our countries of operation for joint project design, development, and implementation.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

WUSC partners with international NGOs to coordinate complementary approaches to concurrent development programming and for technical assistance.

Government Institutions

WUSC partners with government institutions, from the local to the national level, to support sustainable development and service delivery.

Education Institutions

WUSC partners with education institutions for research, academic expertise, and training programs. Our education partners in Canada also play an important role in the resettlement of refugees.

Private Sector

WUSC partners with private sector actors to create sustainable links between demand and supply. Our private sector partners in Canada also play an important role in the resettlement of refugees.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK AROUND THE WORLD

PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Increasing the focus on ongoing teacher professional development in schools

This year we shifted our focus from the direct training of teachers through often one-time workshops on gender-responsive pedagogies and other teaching skills to strengthening the structures that sustainably support teachers' ongoing professional development to encourage teacher retention and drive meaningful improvements in teaching quality. With support from Global Affairs Canada, we piloted Teacher Mentorship, Coaching, and Networking (TMCN) meetings with 44 teachers in South Sudan in partnership with four State Supervisors and 17 teacher-leaders (those already demonstrating exemplary practice in the classroom). We also created a forum for teachers to reflect on training content together, seek mentorship and coaching from more experienced teachers, and access peer-to-peer support. Reflections from a follow up meeting conducted by the State Supervisor in Yambio with 45 participants suggests that teachers are embracing and practicing the knowledge they have acquired through these ongoing professional development opportunities. Developing a sustainable approach to teacher professional development is an ongoing challenge. The regularity of meetings is hampered by the vast distance between schools and limited funds for transportation. Deepening online engagement through tools such as WhatsApp helps address this issue but teachers are currently relying on project-funded mobile phone data WUSC is currently working with other actors in the country to identify how ongoing teacher professional development can be delivered locally in a means that is effective, inclusive and financially sustainable.

Unlocking sustainable financing for technical, vocational, education and training

Financing education and training is a significant barrier for young women who seek to enter the trades in Ghana. Even in cases where school fees are low or nonexistent, transportation, food, and costs associated with offering care at home can be an insurmountable burden for some. WUSC supported the Ghana Chamber of Construction Industry (GhCCI) to develop a resource mobilization strategy for the sustainable financing of TVET scholarships with support from Global Affairs Canada. To date, GhCCI has raised GHC 8,500 from other stakeholders to complement their initial GHC 110,430 contribution. WUSC and the GhCCI envision a sustainable fund renewed on an annual basis through which construction industry partners can support young women to enter the trades, supporting their labour market requirements and social goals. Nearly 700 women have been directly supported to access TVET opportunities from their local education providers, 200 of whom have graduated to date, with hundreds more enrolling in TVET programs following our awareness campaigns. Among the 200 graduates to date, 60% are now employed.

Improving the selection, enrolment, and retention of technical and vocational education and training students through vocational guidance and counseling

There are many reasons students do not complete their studies. Sometimes it's something as simple as a mismatch in expectations that can lead students down the wrong path. Improving young people's awareness of potential jobs post-training and helping them navigate the enrolment process helps ensure the best fit between student candidates and training opportunities. In Iraq, we worked with our network of eight Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) to introduce new Vocational Guidance and Counseling units. With our VTC partners over the past few years, we have hosted workshops on approaches to guidance and counseling services; facilitated knowledge sharing between Canadian and Iraqi guidance and counseling service providers; co-developed a best practice guidebook; and mobilized an ambassador network for ongoing professional development of guidance counselors. Our partners have linked their new guidance and counseling programs with an increased interest in programs, improved student selection, and higher graduation rates. Among students, there has been a 100% satisfaction rate in the guidance and counseling services provided. Our partners are now leading the way in scaling this practice to other VTCs and expanding them to other sectors to benefit a larger number of students. This is just one of the positive changes made in Iraq to the internal structures and governments of TVET institutions. Other activities with similar results—some of which have been integrated into the Iraqi TVET system for the first time—include conducting tracer studies and labour market assessments, integrating gender equality considerations, providing a labour-market driven competency-based training approach and entrepreneurship courses, facilitating internships placements with employers, and offering blended learning options.

Strengthening digital skills training for young women experiencing displacement

We supported the refugee-led Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) in Kenya to provide more holistic support to women students enrolled in their digital training programs, with support from Global Affairs Canada. This included the addition of a life skills module to the training course content, a mentorship component, engaging of trainees' family members and partners, and an on-site daycare facility to support young mothers. These additions have been seen as critical factors contributing to improved access, attendance, completion, and transition to work. This past year, 98% of women enrolled in the program completed their training. However, these improvements have also increased the cost to run the program. We are now working with our partner to refine the model so that improved outcomes remain at a cost structure that can be sustained by SIR and other training providers.

Iraqi youth receive digital skills training to improve their computer literacy and prepare them for employment in the private sector.
© Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Meeting the diverse needs of critical economic actors through the mobilization of skilled volunteers

Community Women's Enterprise Network (CWEN) in Uganda provides critical business service support to young women entrepreneurs in the country. Through this work, they often saw young women lingering in the informal market for longer than necessary because their products didn't yet meet industry standards. The organization recognized this was not an area of their current expertise, so they enlisted the support of a WUSC volunteer from Uganda with standards and quality assurance expertise in the country to share his knowledge and skills with the team. By the end of his mandate, CWEN was already supporting 12 entrepreneurs who were on track to acquiring their Q-Mark certification for their products by the end of 2023. In total, we mobilized over 200 volunteer assignments and over $400,000 in grants through our Partner Innovation Fund to support over 70 partners around the world, with support from Global Affairs Canada. These partners are at the forefront of delivering inclusive and impactful programs and services that enhance youth's economic opportunities. Nearly all—94%—of partners have reported improvements in their organization, and over 70% of partners report improved performance of their initiatives since joining the program.

Determining what works to support entrepreneurship in contexts of displacement

Entrepreneurship skills and support are critical in refugee contexts, where young people are often unable to access formal employment opportunities. Yet few services are available that support the unique needs and challenges of refugee and displaced youth. We worked with our partner, Farm Africa, to launch an Innovation Fund for eligible businesses in refugee and host communities in Kenya, with support from Global Affairs Canada. Businesses receive financing, as well as tailored mentorship and coaching to help ensure that they have the right expertise and support to generate profit and, eventually, scale. We also launched an outreach campaign to refugee and host communities. A total of 2,943 entrepreneurs applied, half of whom were women. 60 micro-entrepreneurs were selected, 65% being refugees and 52% being women—all aged between 18 - 35 years. Our goal is to help refugee-led businesses to expand and hire more refugee and displaced youth, while learning what supports work best in their unique contexts. Ultimately, we seek to foster sustainable improvements in the quality of services that refugee-led businesses can access.

Programming Principles in Action: Contextual Relevance and Quality

In Uganda, we are testing human-centred design (HCD) approaches to see if they can lead to solutions that better respond to the unique needs and opportunities for girls' education. With our partners, Aga Khan Foundation and Circle Innovation, and with the support of Global Affairs Canada, we introduced two new activities into our programming in Moyo and Obongi last year.

Community Design Teams: Community members opted-in to participate in one of twenty design teams that were taken through a series of workshops to facilitate the design process. Together, teams identified the unique barriers to girls' education in their community, and designed specific solutions to address them. Solutions included school gardens, radio talk shows, learning kits, financial literacy home visits, and interval payment approaches for school fees. This year, design teams will receive funding to test, implement, and eventually scale the most promising solutions as determined by the community.

Youth-Led Campaigns: Forty young adults participated in a design process to develop a new community-wide campaign that would promote gender equality and generate greater support for girls' education. Together, young women and men from the community developed a theme, slogan, and key messages for the campaign. This year, they will receive further support to launch campaign activities in their communities.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK AROUND THE WORLD

CONVENING PEOPLE, MOBILIZING KNOWLEDGE, AND ENGAGING IN POLICY DIALOGUES

Facilitating connections between universities and refugee students in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, and Tanzania

With the Mastercard Foundation, we are supporting their Scholars Program partners to create more post-secondary education opportunities for refugee and displaced students. One of the greatest barriers to improved inclusion is a gap in information about the unique challenges refugee students face in accessing higher education due to low levels of engagement between post-secondary education institutions and refugee communities. We supported partners to visit refugee camps and settlements to deepen their contextual understanding toward more inclusive recruitment, engagement, and transition strategies. Nearly 500 students participated in the outreach visits, as did senior government officials. By early 2023, two students had been successfully recruited to United States International University Africa (USIU-A) from Kigali. Four others from Tanzania who had been awaiting travel documents to begin their studies at USIU-A received the required permission to travel to Kenya. We are now working with refugee communities and Scholars Program partners to create a database of refugee-led organizations as these actors provide a critical network of information sharing within their communities. By connecting university partners to this network, we can facilitate more regular information sharing about education opportunities for refugees.

Finding new ways to strengthen transitions to post-secondary education for displaced youth with UNHCR and the Tertiary Refugee Students Network (TRSN)

UNHCR estimates that only 3% of refugees have access to post-secondary education globally, much lower than the global average of 37%. New solutions are urgently needed to help address this significant gap. That's why we joined together with UNHCR and TRSN, along with the members of our Youth Advisory Committee for our DREEM initiative, to convene a two-day discussion in Kigali, Rwanda with higher education actors, including Africa-based partners of Mastercard Foundation's Scholars Program. We focused on possible partnerships and new approaches that would help remove the barriers that many displaced youth face in accessing post-secondary education. Participants left the convening with a renewed commitment to supporting displaced students, and an enhanced understanding of the important role of partnerships with refugee-led organizations in achieving greater inclusion. This convening was part of UNHCR's 15by30 campaign, which aims to achieve 15% enrolment in higher education among refugees by 2030. This past year, WUSC and UNHCR also co-hosted similar meetings with education actors in Mexico and Ecuador.

Uncovering the levers of change to better support women climate entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa

Women entrepreneurs are critical to a thriving and inclusive economy, yet they face numerous challenges in growing their businesses. These challenges are compounded for women climate entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa, who are critical innovators and catalysts in the response to climate change around the world. With support from Global Affairs Canada, we interviewed multiple stakeholders across sub-Saharan Africa to better understand these challenges and uncover the greatest opportunities for transformative change. Our report "Strategies for Incubators and Accelerators: Strengthening Ecosystems for Women Climate Entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa" highlights some of the unique challenges women entrepreneurs face across four key underlying factors: access to finance, capacity-building programs, mentoring, and gender biases. It also highlights innovative solutions from Malawi, Ghana, and Kenya and concludes with several recommendations for incubators, accelerators, and other stakeholders to help ensure women climate entrepreneurs can access the support they need for their businesses to thrive.

Introducing new institutional policies that create safer learning spaces for young women

In Ghana, we hosted an innovation challenge for women's rights organizations to support locally driven and women-led advocacy solutions toward changing public perceptions and practices that prevent young women from accessing employment opportunities in non-traditional trades. WUSC partnered with women's rights organisation, ABANTU, to fund and support African Women International (AFWI) in their advocacy efforts against sexual harassment in technical and vocational education and training institutions in Takoradi. Takoradi Technical Institute (TTI) is a partner of WUSC's that provides skills training for young women in Information and Communications Technology, and Welding and Fabrication. Through targeted outreach to TTI, AFWI convinced the institute to adopt a new sexual harassment policy and reporting mechanism as a further demonstration of their commitment to creating safe learning environments for all students. In the roll-out of the new policy, posters were placed around the institute with information on reporting, and department leads held monthly sessions with students to raise awareness on the signs of sexual harassment. TTI attributes a recent reduction in the number of teenage pregnancies among its students to the adoption of the new sexual harassment policy, supporting women's agency and reducing the chance of education disruptions.

Sharing new research on economic opportunities and challenges for refugees and displaced youth

Depending on the country and context of displacement, refugees face a variety of different challenges and opportunities for economic activity and income generation. To better understand the nuances across diverse contexts of displacement, WUSC and Mastercard Foundation supported research into economic opportunities for displaced youth in Central Sahel with Expectation State and into refugee access to work permits and business licenses in Kenya with University of Oxford's Refugee-Led Research Hub. In Canada, in partnership with the WES Mariam Assefa Fund, we also conducted research on the outcomes of the first three years of our employment-linked refugee resettlement work. Findings from the research were shared on the WUSC website and through online and in-person events.

Programming Principles in Action: Scale

For over forty years, WUSC's Student Refugee Program has offered a legal pathway to Canada for young refugees through partnerships with post-secondary education institutions. The sustainable impact of this initiative demonstrates the incredible potential for peer-to-peer sponsorship models to increase durable solutions for refugees. Over the past decade, we have doubled the program's reach from 75 students in 2014 to over 150 in 2022.

While this growth represents monumental impacts in lives of each of the young people supported, it remains a small percentage of the estimated 43 million displaced youth in urgent need of a durable solution. With many of Canada's post-secondary institutions already partnering on this program, we recognize the potential for scaling of education pathways in Canada is limited. That's why we have experimented with new approaches in recent years. Our HIRES initiative replicates many of the core elements of the Student Refugee Program, but works with employers in British Columbia's tourism sector to match talented young refugees in Kenya with job vacancies. Over the past three years, we have secured durable solutions and employment placements in Canada for 59 young people through this pathway.

This experience has helped inform the new employment-linked legal pathway to Canada, which provides an immigration pathway that is uncapped, more financially viable for employers, and addresses barriers that are commonly faced by refugee populations. By working within this new mechanism that is more appropriate to the needs of refugees, WUSC can greatly expand the number of employment and durable solution opportunities for young refugees in Canada.

For the final project of their Hospitality Skills Development Training program at Camosun College, HIRES participants work as a team to prepare appetizers and put their serving skills into practice for special guests involved in the HIRES program.
© Camosun College

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK AROUND THE WORLD

ENGAGING ON BELIEFS, NORMS, AND BEHAVIOURS THAT PREVENT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REALIZING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Proving women can excel in non-traditional sectors

The INVEST in Her multi-media campaign is a national awareness raising initiative that seeks to challenge harmful stereotypes of women who work in non-traditional sectors in Ghana. Through media engagement, a radio drama series, social media activities, and focus group discussions with communities, the campaign has the potential to reach more than 450,000 individuals. Campaign activities are undertaken with our partners, Farm Radio International and Lyme Haus, with the support of Global Affairs Canada. Last year, 1,512 young women indicated their willingness to enroll in non-traditional technical, vocational education and training (TVET) programs by applying for the scholarships to attend, representing an increase of 631 from the year prior. In Iraq, we supported TVET institutions to showcase stories of women who gained meaningful employment following graduation from their training programs to challenge widely held beliefs that women are not present in certain sectors in the economy. While working with the institutions to create more inclusive and relevant training opportunities, we significantly increased the number of women enrolled in non-traditional training programs to support more than 500 women at six training centres. The institutions then leveraged the opportunity this cohort created for storytelling to build more momentum and sustain a higher number of successful women applicants.

Amplifying the voices of young people affected by displacement in advocacy efforts

Through the Youth Advisory Council of our DREEM initiative, in partnership with Mastercard Foundation, we invite young people from refugee backgrounds to design and deliver advocacy initiatives for their peers and other actors engaged in refugee issues. This past year, among several other activities, council members organized a virtual Global Dialogue for the Women Deliver conference on the intersections of displacement, gender equality, and education. Council members report a 100% satisfaction rate in the support and opportunities that are provided through their participation in the program. They report improved self-esteem and enhanced public speaking and leadership skills, as well as greater confidence in their ability to drive change in their communities. They also tell us that the council provides them with a platform to build their social and professional networks while boosting their sense of fulfillment through the tangible impacts of their contributions to project design and delivery.

Creating platforms for youth to share their stories with other young people

In Malawi, WUSC volunteers, supported by Global Affairs Canada, collaborated with Timveni, a youth media organization and Mzuzu E-hub, a business development support services provider, to launch a new podcast that shares the unique perspectives of youth on issues like gender equality, inclusion, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment. Available on Spotify, YouTube, and community radio stations, the podcast is accessible in English, Tumbuka, and Chichewa. Episodes feature young people who are directly benefiting from the support and services of economic and social service providers in Malawi, providing them with a platform to share their experiences toward improved and more inclusive practices.

Encouraging more people to get involved in global development issues that directly impact their community

Last year, WUSC and its network of ambassadors directly engaged more than 30,000 people in raising awareness on global development, with the support of Global Affairs Canada. We facilitated more than 45,000 supportive actions, such as applying to volunteer, sharing information, testing knowledge, signing petitions, and attending events. Post-every surveys have indicated improved knowledge of global development among 100% of event participants. We believe volunteering is one of the most transformative actions an individual can take to engage in global development. The majority of our volunteers—83%—tell us their level of engagement increased following their volunteer assignment and 90% say they are continuing to actively support global development efforts by raising awareness, engaging in advocacy, and even transitioning their careers into the development sector.

Programming Principles in Action: Inclusion

Deepening the engagement of communities in development programs that impact their lives is essential to building accountability for interventions to respond to the greatest needs. In St. Lucia, we created a unique opportunity for young people to play an active role in shaping the implementation of our programming in the country. The National Youth Volunteer Program of St. Lucia provides hands-on experience to young people in the agriculture sector whose education and training had been disrupted by the pandemic. This initiative was made possible through a partnership with Sir Arther lewis Community College (SALCC), the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC), and the St. Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth (SLAFY), and with the support of Global Affairs Canada. In total, 28 young people participated in the program, creating lasting impact through the reconstruction of a sector that was hit particularly hard by the pandemic.

To see the full list of initiatives, including key activities and results in 2022/2023, download our Project Transparency Report at *wusc.ca*.

THE CHANGES WE ARE SEEING IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

EDUCATION

Overall, enrolment and transitions between grades is increasing while performance is maintaining. These are important wins in the context of global learning losses post-pandemic.

While the positive shifts in girls' enrolment are extremely encouraging, it is difficult to attribute these increases to any one factor. With the underlying assumption that some of the key barriers to enrolment are not only within schools, but rather caused by community attitudes and behaviours, it is interesting to reflect on adaptations made within our community engagement efforts to be more participatory and action-oriented, which may have contributed to the enrolment gains.

Meanwhile, the decrease in performance among girls at host community schools could suggest that learners living within the host community may have been more affected by the negative impacts the pandemic has had on learning. This could be explained by the fact that learners within the camp contexts, due to greater inputs from UNHCR and their partners, were exposed to greater and more accessible stop-gap learning solutions during the pandemic-related school closures. This included radio-based teaching and learning, provision of lamps, the establishment of wifi hotspots, provision of food supplies, and the continued provision of psychosocial support via remote means including WhatsApp.

- In Uganda, **910** youth who had been out-of-school were newly enrolled, nearly half of whom were girls and more than 200 of whom were refugees.

- In South Sudan, **93%** of girls receiving secondary school scholarships progressed to the next grade.

- In Kalobeyei in Kenya, there was a nearly **20%** increase in the number of girls enrolled in schools supported by our project.

- In Kakuma, Dadaab, and surrounding host communities in Kenya, **89%** of girls who had received support progressed to the next grade.

- In Kalobeyei in Kenya, there was a slight positive gain in girls' average performance in national exams at secondary level compared to 2021 (+0.32 pts in camp schools; +0.1 pts in host schools); at primary level, there was a slight positive shift in girls' average performance in camp-based schools (+0.1 pts), but a decline in host community schools (-13.9 pts).

Fostering Belief in the Power of Education: Fanta's Re-enrolment Story

Fanta has always been a star student, excelling at the top of her class. But the stressful economic pressures that families living in rural southern Mali face creates little room to prioritize education even among the best students. Fanta's mother felt she had no choice but to pull her from school so that she could live and earn an income in a bigger, nearby city as a housekeeper while her mother remained at home to provide care for her husband who was unwell. But the School Director soon contacted Fanta's mother to discuss her case. He was motivated to do so by community mobilizers—teachers and students who are familiar with the gendered barriers to education and who support accountability among School Management and Protection Communities to implement their roles and responsibilities. Mobilizers joined the Director in his home visit with Fanta's mother, where they engaged in a discussion on the potential future benefits to the family if they were to support Fanta to complete her studies. Although her mother continues to face economic hardships, she made a radical commitment to continue to prioritize Fanta's education in hopes for a brighter future. Fanta returned home and re-enrolled at the school where she currently holds the second highest grades in her class.

We aim to support as many girls like Fanta as possible to complete their education. In this photo, a student in Kenya makes time to complete their homework. Girls' education is key to our work and has the potential to benefit girls' families and their communities. © Lorenzo Moscia

THE CHANGES WE ARE SEEING IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Graduation from vocational training or skills development programs does not automatically lead to employment. Young people, especially young women, face barriers to access work, and continue to experience pressure from family, friends and broader communities to conform to social norms that may keep them out of work. For this reason, many WUSC supported TVET programs have not resulted in employment levels that we initially expected.

In Iraq, private sector employment continues to be seen as an unattractive opportunity for youth. Many turn to the public sector for employment opportunities seeking job security, higher wages and benefits, and better working hours. Our TVET programming in Iraq will continue to work to improve opportunities within the private sector and awareness of these opportunities. We will do this by deepening our engagement with employment councils, strengthening career development centers, offering matching grants to employers to make workplaces and training more accessible to young women, and leveraging social marketing campaigns to influence social norms and perceptions of the private sector.

One sector that has delivered more promising income-generating opportunities is digital skills training through which our partners are opening up new earning opportunities for young, displaced women.

- In Iraq, **33%** of TVET students have gained employment (including self-employment) within 6 months of graduating, an 8% increase from the year prior.
- In Jordan, **24%** of women TVET students gained employment within one year of graduating, a 14% increase from the year prior.
- In Ghana, **60%** of women supported through various mechanisms (internships, training) report obtaining employment.
- In Canada, **67%** of participants of our employer-linked complementary pathways to resettlement report their work is meaningful.
- In Kenya, **98%** of surveyed graduates of the digital skills training program reported higher earnings as a direct result of the training.

Three-quarters of women entrepreneurs involved in climate-related businesses supported reported business growth within this year.

From Electrical Employee to Employer: Yasser's Entrepreneurship Story

Although Yasser had been engaged in electrical work for some time, he knew he was ready to take his skills to the next level. He wanted the opportunity to take on more leadership and establish more control over his career.

When he came across a post on social media about a new training program in the field of electricity, he realized it might be just the opportunity he had been looking for. After completing the course, Yasser found that not only had his technical skills improved, but he had discovered a new found confidence in himself and his abilities. He attributes a lot of his success to his teachers' dedication and encouragement.

A short while later, Yasser decided to return to the vocational training centre to attend their entrepreneurship course. He is now a proud electrical business owner who has been able to increase his income and employ other youth in his community. He even hired a fellow classmate from the training program. He now regularly provides internship opportunities for incoming students at the training centre.

Practical experience is essential for work in the trades. With the help of trainers, students have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they learn through vocational training, unlocking new employment opportunities.
© Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

THE CHANGES WE ARE SEEING IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

EMPOWERMENT

Our empowerment programming looks at increasing levels of self confidence, critical thinking, problem solving, and abilities to advocate.

While our skills building initiatives have been specifically designed to equip youth, and young women in particular, with market-aligned skills toward the goal of gaining employment, it is important to note a number of additional components that are embedded within these programs have contributed to greater empowerment overall, including mentorship, coaching, life skills training, and intentional and targeted efforts to meaningfully engage men and boys. The successes we are seeing in relation to trainees' increased decision-making, therefore, cannot only be attributed to the gaining of skills for employment, but likely rely upon a multi-pronged approach with complementary components that, when combined, have a greater impact on decision-making power and, ultimately, overall empowerment; something that continues to validate our overall theory of change.

Encouragingly, while yet to be measured across all current programming, ongoing monitoring data and qualitative findings suggest that interventions such as mentoring and life skills are having a positive effect on girls' self-esteem, confidence, and their ability to make decisions about their education and other personal domains.

- In Kenya, **68%** of young women who participated in WUSC supported soft skills training report feeling empowered to make their own decisions, set personal goals, and achieve them. Nearly three-quarters of young women reported they are the primary decision-makers on key aspects of their lives, including employment, participation in training, and how they spend their money.

- In Iraq, **83%** of youth report being able to participate in household decision-making.

- In Ghana, **79%** of women report having control over household income (compared to 49% at baseline) and 99% participate in household decision-making (compared to 85% at baseline).

- In Ghana **80%** of women entrepreneurs reported feeling confident in their ability to scale up their business (up from 49% at baseline).

Shaping the Future for Herself and Her Community: Colombe's Advocacy Story

Colombe has been an active member of her community for two years through her participation in a youth group that raises awareness among their peers on issues of importance to them in the city of San Pedro in Côte d'Ivoire. At 16 years old, she is a committed advocate and a powerful force to be reckoned with. But even Colombe didn't have much experience in talking about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) with her peers. So when someone from WUSC's PASSERELLE project came to speak with the group about how they could collaborate on awareness raising activities for SRHR, Colombe stayed quiet, unsure of her ability to engage in the conversation. But over the next couple of weeks, as she rehearsed some of the awareness raising sketches and contributed to the design of communications materials for the community, she began to find her voice on the subject. She eventually even volunteered to be the face of the campaign, a brave commitment given the sometimes taboo nature of SRHR issues. Through these activities, Colombe discovered a newfound sense of importance in her leadership. She wanted to help turn the tide of information to ensure her friends had access to the knowledge they needed to make their own health choices. So Colombe joined the Youth Advisory Committee of the PASSERELLE project to help shape the SRHR interventions her community engages in. She says she feels happier in her ability to better make her own decisions and help her peers to do the same.

A group of young women gather for a celebration during International Women's Day in San-Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire. Through our sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming, we are giving adolescent girls and young women the tools to access and advocate for their rights. © WUSC

THE CHANGES WE ARE SEEING IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS TO RESETTLEMENT FOR YOUNG REFUGEES

Once again, the numbers of forced migrants reached new records. The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide was estimated to be 108.4 million at the end of 2022. This has largely been driven by persistent displacement from regions such as Venezuela, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and ongoing protracted conflicts in areas like Myanmar, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region. For refugees, accessing a durable solution to their displacement can make a significant difference in their quality of life. Yet the rate of forced migration growth has outpaced improvements in protection mechanisms.

In addition to supporting the integration of refugees into education and economic systems in contexts of displacement, we also work with education and employment partners in Canada to create complementary pathways to resettlement for young refugees. WUSC welcomed its largest cohort of Student Refugee Program students to date: 170 (89 women)—up from 144 in the previous year. We extended our reach to encompass new demographics of students, including a cohort from Afghanistan and a second cohort of refugee athletes. This expansion involved the inclusion of six additional campuses, contributing to a total of 110 campuses in the program. To date, we have resettled over 2,500 refugees from 39 countries of origin.

The HIRES initiative replicates many of the core elements of the SRP, but working with employers rather than universities and colleges, to match talented young refugees in Kenya with employers in Canada's tourism and hospitality sector. In two years, WUSC and partners facilitated resettlement and employment placements in Canada for 59 young people through this pathway.

Our active and open knowledge-sharing on our experience with complementary pathways has been well-received by many countries, including USA, South Korea, UK, Australia, the Philippines, and the EU. We supported the launch of pilot initiatives in 6 new countries, for which WUSC is playing a key advisory and implementing role. For example, our partners in Mexico enabled ten additional refugee students to access safety and education in their country.

- **170** refugees resettled to Canada through WUSC's partnership with university, college, and CEGEP communities across the country.
- The mobilization of new campuses over the past decade has enabled us to sustainably **double** the number of refugees supported each year.
- **One** individual gaining access to training, employment, and a durable legal status in Canada through HIRES.
- **31** people identified, trained, and matched with employers, due to arrive in 2023-2024.
- Provided support to partner for **10** additional refugees to access safety and education in Mexico.

Durable Solutions that Open New Doors: Manyang's Resettlement and Education Story

Without access to a durable solution, many young refugees face nearly insurmountable obstacles to post-secondary education. That was the situation facing Manyang in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. He had worked hard to graduate among the top in his class and he knew he could achieve more in his life if he were able to access post-secondary education. But he also knew many of his friends were deserving of that opportunity as well. He also knew that their refugee status would be a significant barrier and that there were very few opportunities to meet the needs of these talented young students. He was one of 200 students to apply to the Student Refugee Program from Kakuma that year. When he heard he was among the few to be selected, he later told us it was one of the most exciting moments of his life. Arriving in Montreal as a Permanent Resident, he immediately began his studies in economics and computer science at McGill University. He soon joined his campus WUSC Local Committee where he found himself back at the airport over the next few years to welcome the incoming cohort of students. Having recently graduated from McGill, he is eagerly exploring all of the possibilities that are now open to him as a Permanent Resident and a university graduate.

Manyang moved to Canada to pursue his postsecondary studies through the Student Refugee Program. This past year he graduated at the top of his class. He is working as a software engineer in Canada. This would not be possible without the help of our network of postsecondary institutions and volunteers across Canada. © WUSC

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Algonquin College*
Brandon University*
British Columbia Institute of Technology*
Brock University*
Camosun College*
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Vancouver Island University*
Western University*
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* *Also has a WUSC Local Committee*

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A group shot of HIRES program participants at their graduation ceremony. Their post-arrival training at Camosun College in Victoria, British Columbia helped equip them with the knowledge, skills, and experience they needed before beginning employment in the hospitality sector in Canada. © Camosun College

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Assets	$	$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	20,912,185	12,437,651
Short-term investments	140,000	140,000
Program receivables	3,529,966	4,718,398
Advances receivable	283,564	222,719
Prepaid expenses	307,880	246,263
	25,173,595	17,765,031
Long-term investments	49,995	49,995
Tangible capital and intangible assets	325,713	425,888
	25,549,303	18,240,914
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,096,634	1,953,805
Deferred contributions and contract advances	19,539,990	12,421,734
Deferred revenue – Lewis Perinbam award	34,816	38,458
	21,671,440	14,413,997
Net Assets		
Invested in tangible capital and intangible assets	325,713	425,888
Internally restricted	3,482,272	3,331,952
Endowment Fund	69,878	69,077
	3,877,863	3,826,917
	25,549,303	18,240,914

View our full financial statements online at wusc.ca.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

March 31, 2022, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Revenue	$	$
Grants and contributions		
Government of Canada	30,788,524	28,594,213
UK-Aid	1,551,654	6,838,424
Other Canadian funding	1,039,366	889,919
Other foreign funding	2,246,169	1,467,960
Other income	280,539	323,013
Donated services	6,679,287	1,909,931
	42,585,539	40,023,460
Expenses		
Programs	31,671,731	34,064,746
Operations	3,815,700	3,648,015
Fundraising and alumni engagement	247,886	210,318
Governance	22,315	15,755
Donated services	6,679,287	1,909,931
	42,436,919	39,848,765
Excess of revenue over expenses before undernoted item	148,620	174,695
Severance – restructuring	98,475	51,483
Excess of revenue over expenses	50,145	123,212

Every year, student-led WUSC Local Committees on over 90 Canadian college, university, and cégep campuses across Canada mobilize additional financial and non-financial resources to support the resettlement and access to education for 166 students from refugee backgrounds. In 2022 - 2023, this support was estimated to be $10.23 million and includes fundraising, student union levies, waivers for tuition, education material, and meals, and other forms of support. This amount does not include the value of the time and effort of on-campus volunteers in support of the Student Refugee Program.

WUSC Local Committee members at postsecondary institutions across Canada support WUSC's efforts to resettle refugee youth through the Student Refugee Program. These students at Toronto Metropolitan University help welcome refugee students on campus. © WUSC

A mural by Ottawa-based artist, Kalkidan Assefa, showcases the power of education and the role of farmers in the agriculture sector. Commissioned by WUSC and Farm Radio International. © Danny Beswick

WUSC

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Charitable Registration Number

11930 4848 RR0001

WUSC acknowledges that its main office, in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, is located on the traditional, unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin Territories. WUSC has employees who work and benefit from living on Indigenous territories across Canada, the United States, and globally.

WUSC EUMC